

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

AMEMBASSY SUVA

AMCONSUL MELBOURNE

UNCLAS STATE 186133

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAIR, AS, FJ, NZ

SUBJECT: VISIT OF FIJIAN MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS

REFS: (A) STATE 174374, (B) SUVA 739

1. FIJIAN COMMUNICATIONS MINISTER MAVOA, ACCOMPANIED BY AMBASSADOR SIKIVOU AND AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE VUNIBOBO, VISITED WASHINGTON FROM JULY 20-22 TO PRESENT GOF VIEWS ON SOUTH PACIFIC AIR ROUTE CASE NOW PENDING BEFORE CIVIL AERONAUTICS BOARD. MAVOA MET WITH EA ASSISTANT SECRETARY HUMMEL, CAB STAFF MEMBERS AND OFFICE OF AVIATION DURING HIS VISIT. HE ALSO MADE COURTESY CALL ON CAB CHAIRMAN ROBSON AND WHITE HOUSE OFFICIALS FOLLOWING CASE. AS CAB HAS COMPLETED PUBLIC HEARINGS, NO DISCUSSION OF SPECIFIC ROUTES OR RIGHTS WITH ROBSON WAS POSSIBLE.

2. IN MEETINGS WITH STATE OFFICERS AND CAB STAFF, MAVOA
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STATED FIJIAN DESIRE TO HAVE THROUGH SERVICE FROM US

WEST COAST TERMINATING IN FIJI. HE STRESSED THAT EXISTING SERVICE, I.E. PA, QANTA- AND ANZ, WAS DESIGNED BY CARRIERS FOR US-AUSTRALIA/NEW ZEALAND TRAFFIC, RESULTING IN INFREQUENT SERVICE AND INCONVENIENT ARRIVAL TIMES IN FIJI. MAVOA ALSO POINTED OUT THAT THE NUMBER OF US TOURISTS VISITING FIJI AND THE REGION (SAMOA, TONGA)

HAD DECLINED AND THAT HE BELIEVED BETTER AIR SERVICE AND LOWER FARES WOULD ATTRACT MORE US TOURISTS. AMBASSADOR SIKIVOU POINTED OUT THAT TOURISM WAS FIJI'S SECOND LARGEST FOREIGN EXCHANGE EARNER, AND THAT ANYTHING THAT COULD BE DONE TO ASSIST THE TOURIST INDUSTRY WOULD STRENGTHEN THE FIJIAN ECONOMY.

3. ANP AND AVIATION OFFICERS TOLD MAVOA THAT GOF VIEWS WOULD BE GIVEN SYMPATHETIC CONSIDERATION WHEN DEPARTMENT COMMENTS ON CAB RECOMMENDATION TO THE PRESIDENT. WE WERE, OF COURSE, UNABLE TO ASSURE MAVOA THAT DEPARTMENT WOULD SUPPORT ANY SPECIFIC ROUTE STRUCTURE OR ANY INDIVIDUAL CARRIER.

4. FYI. MAVOA'S APPOINTMENTS, OTHER THAN STATE AND CAB, WERE ARRANGED BY JOHN ADAMS ASSOCIATES, WASHINGTON REPRESENTATIVE OF HAWAIIAN AIRLINES. HAWAIIAN IS THE ONLY CARRIER WHICH REQUESTED A ROUTE TERMINATING IN FIJI. FROM THE CAB HEARINGS, HOWEVER, IT APPEARS HAWAIIAN SERVICE TO PAGO PAGO AND NADI IS DEPENDENT UPON HAWAIIAN RECEIVING MAINLAND-HONOLULU RIGHTS. KISSINGER

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